

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN**

Re: Review of the Emergency Alert System, First Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, EB Docket No. 04-296

Today, we take the important step of applying the emergency alert system (EAS) rules to digital media. We also continue our work to improve upon the current system.

Congress has charged the Commission with promoting the safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communication. To fulfill this important directive, the Commission has developed EAS, a national warning system. While this system performs a critical function in ensuring public safety, it was developed in 1994 and relies on the delivery of alerts and warnings through analog radio and television broadcast stations and cable systems. Today, however, a large and growing percentage of television viewers and radio listeners receive their programming from digital media. In this *Order*, we update our rules to require the participation of digital television and radio, digital cable, and satellite television and radio in EAS. This will ensure that all television viewers and radio listeners have access to national and/or regional public alerts and warnings in the event of an emergency.

Equally, if not more, important, is our continued work to develop a more comprehensive and more robust alert system. Hurricane Katrina (and Hurricanes Rita and Wilma) have only served to emphasize the need for a comprehensive and robust alert system that allows officials at the national, state and local levels to reach affected citizens in the most effective and efficient manner possible. This system should have built-in redundancy features. Among other things, it should incorporate the internet, which was designed by the military to be robust and contains network redundancy functionalities. The system also should take advantage of advances in technology that enable officials to reach large numbers of people simultaneously through a variety of communications media. Our work in this area is of the utmost importance. I look forward to working with my fellow Commissioners to develop a public alert and warning system that is wide-reaching and furthers the Commission's core mission of promoting public safety through a robust communications system.